
CONCERNING THE CONDUCT OF MEDICAL
JOURNALS AND CONTROVERSIES.

By GEORGE M. GOULD, M. D.,

PHILADELPHIA.

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BY GEORGE M. GOULD, M. D.,

PHILADELPHIA.

To the Editor of *The Annals of Ophthalmology*.

Dear Sir:—The following correspondence is self-explanatory:—

RE DEXTROCULARITY.

To the Editor of "Ophthalmology":—

Dr. Swan M. Burnett kindly writes calling my attention to the article of Dr. H. Kaiser published in the first volume of the *Archives of Ophthalmology*, 1869. Incidental to a discussion of binocular vision this author correctly sets forth the evident criticism of the statements of Helmholtz and Hering in reference to the Cyclopean eye, and advances the theory of what he calls "the prevailing eye." This is essentially the same as that which I have called "the dominant eye." I was unaware of Dr. Kaiser's study, and am delighted to learn of the confirmatory conclusions reached so long ago by a careful and scientific observer, and am glad to give him credit for the first statement of the truth of dextrocularity and sinistrocularity. The anatomic or physiologic basis and necessity for the theory was, however, not stated by Dr. Kaiser, and so his study has not received the recognition it deserved. Neither myself nor the members of the American Ophthalmological Society, present at the Atlantic City meeting, knew of it or we had forgotten it. Modern scientific literature has grown to such enormous proportions that none can hope to have knowledge of all the studies made even upon special subjects,—and particularly if not indexed and epitomized by later authors. Another illustration of this is most pertinent: On page 337 of *Ophthalmology*, Vol. 1, is an article by Majewsky which strangely repeats the arguments and illustrations of Dr. Kaiser's study made 34 years pre-

viously. Thus a second person independently comes to the conclusion of Kaiser as regards dextrocularity.

Permit me while upon this subject to thank Dr. Fridenberg for his contribution published in your first number of *Ophthalmology*. It was unkind of him to demolish the theory a second time, as he had already done it so thoroughly and urbanely at Atlantic City in one minute after he had first learned of it. He, also, evidently had not read the articles of Kaiser, Majewsky, and others. *The unfortunate collection of epithets made use of by Dr. Fridenberg and generally allowed publication by *Ophthalmology* would prevent me from making any reply, even if his logic, excellent of its kind, called for attention. He should not be at such pains to controvert an author whose article and personality he holds in such scorn as to characterize in these terms:—"Such assurance," "confusion," "cart before the horse" (many times repeated), "queer statements," "wholesome statements," "evident inaccuracy," "absurd," "misstatements," "unsupported assertions," "inaccuracies of observation," "contradictory logic," "hasty conclusion," "dangerously visionary," "fantastic assumption," "pseudo-science," "greater height of absurdity," "squander sight," "grasp at the shadow and lose the substance," "for the sake of a chimera juggle with a vital function," "risk incalculable harm," etc.* One guilty of the scientific, literary, and logical crimes thus implied hardly merits 17 octavo pages of criticism. It is a poor compliment to the readers of *Ophthalmology*, any one of whom may easily demonstrate the truth and value, scientifically and medically, of dextrocularity and sinistrocularity.

Respectfully yours,

Geo. M. Gould.

January, 1905.

The sentences between these stars (), are those marked as necessary to excise. G. M. G.

DR. WUERDEMANN'S REPLY.

January 30, 1905.

Dr. George M. Gould,
Philadelphia, Pa.

My Dear Doctor: Yours of the 28th, together with letter for publication in *Ophthalmology*, received. Have also received letter from Dr. Burnett. Both will be published.

I must, however, edit your sarcasm. The polemic article

of Dr. Fridenberg and the review of Dr. Melville Black had also been blue-penciled by me to the point where I thought the personalities has been sufficiently eliminated. I am, therefore, returning you your letter with the suggested corrections, and hope you will return same to me at once, so that I can put in the April issue, copy for which is mostly in press.

I beg to inform you that *Ophthalmology* proposes to submit both sides of any question, without fear or favor, the same as you do with *American Medicine*.

...*Ophthalmology* will always be pleased to receive contributions from you, and we hope for more, especially on disputed points. We would also be pleased to consider any criticisms you might have to offer in regard to our journal.

With kind regards,

Very truly yours,

H. V. Würdemann.

DR. GOULD'S SECOND LETTER.

Dr. H. V. Würdemann,

105 Grand Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

My dear Dr. Würdemann: Your letter of January 30th is received, and I must express my astonishment. In my article criticised by Dr. Fridenberg there was not a word that could be suggestive of personality. He uses the long string of rude personal epithets in *his* criticisms which I have merely quoted, "assurance," "pseudo-science," etc.; I merely repeated these words in order to call attention to the kind of writing with which I am met. I had not been remotely "personal;" in repeating the words in quotation marks you consider me personal! Frankly, I do not understand nor agree. You did not "blue pencil" these words of his article; you do delete them in my reply when simply quoted literally. Why? The result is that you allow Dr. Fridenberg to attack me personally and will not allow me merely to quote his words without application to any-one, but solely as instances of personalities. If I should call Dr. Fridenberg's article and author by the terms he uses in speaking of mine and me would you allow it? And yet I am in the wrong, and Dr. Fridenberg is allowed his epithets without opportunity of my referring to them simply because (according to your letter) he used worse terms which were eliminated! I trust, in the interests of "both sides" which you uphold, you will print

my letter as it stands. If you edited out of Dr. Fridenberg's letter the worst of his attack then his animus must have been evident to you. Why, therefore, did you allow those which I have quoted to stand?

And Dr. Black's worst things you have also blue-penciled. Why did you not erase all of his abstract? It does not at all epitomise my article, but was plainly "dead bent" on ridiculing it. Yet the article was a serious study of a serious fact—the methods of receiving medical discoveries. And Dr. Black's "abstract" was editorial matter, representing editorial, or objective professional opinion. It is itself another capital example of the method of receiving medical discoveries.

You ask for criticisms of your journal. The foregoing is my reply. But what use? You allow others to be personal, "caustic," to a strange extreme, but I may not be so in any degree, nor even so impersonal as to quote for illustration without comment. Will you explain?

Cordially yours,
George M. Gould.

DR. WUERDEMANN'S SECOND LETTER.

Dr. Geo. M. Gould,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear Doctor: I have delayed yours of the 2nd until I could consult other members of the Staff. We have decided to limit the pages of *Ophthalmology* to original articles, abstracts and reviews. This policy will not permit of publication of "correspondence" or news items which are delegated to the weekly and monthly journals.

We would be pleased, however, to receive an original article from you, taking up your side of the argument on Dextro-ocular and sinistrocularity.

With regards,
Very truly yours,
H. V. Würdemann.

DR. GOULD'S THIRD LETTER.

Dear Dr. Würdemann:—

I am sorry that I have been at least the indirect cause of the omission of *Correspondence and*

News Items from *Ophthalmology*,—as not seldom such pages are the most valuable in a medical journal. The plan, however, does undoubtedly effectually dispose of troublesome writers and awkward editorial predicaments.

You ask me to contribute an original article, but before writing it I feel that I must ask you to give me definite answers to the following questions:—

1. If the article is conceived and written in the spirit of your editorial abstract of my paper on *The Reception of Medical Discoveries* will you accept it?

2. Will you accept, if, in speaking of another contributor and his article, I use the following terms?—"Such assurance," "confusion," "cart before the horse," (many times repeated), "queer statement," "wholesale statements," "evident inaccuracy," "absurd," "misstatement," "unsupported assertions," "inaccuracies of observation," "contradictory logic," "hasty conclusion," "dangerously visionary," "fantastic assumption," "pseudoscience," "greater height of absurdity," "squander sight," "grasp at the shadow and lose the substance," "for the sake of a chimera juggle with a vital function," "risk incalculable harm," etc.

Sincerely yours,
Geo. M. Gould.

ANSWER TO THE LAST LETTER.

March 2, 1905.

Ophthalmology will publish polemic articles attacking or defending scientific opinions. They must, however, be pertinent to the controversy, and must not attack nor criticise our publication for we are only a medium for the thoughts of others, and are not responsible and do not necessarily agree or disagree with the writers who use our pages as a medium.

We see no objection to the use of the words and phrases you have suggested in your letter of the 23rd ultimo.

Very truly yours,
H. V. Würdemann.

A LAST WORD.

March 4, 1905.

Dear Dr. Würdemann:—

In answer to your kind letter of March 2, I would ask:

1. Was Dr. Black's editorial epitome of my article not an instance of the evil you deprecate?

2. You evade answer to my question if an article motivated in the same spirit, and carried out in the manner, of Dr. Black's resume, will be acceptable to you,

3. Why is your publication not to be criticised or attacked when it attacks contributors, and writers?

4. You see no objection to the use of the words I quote, and yet when I merely repeated them as instances of wrong methods of controversy, and without comment, you excluded them from my letter, and did not exclude them from Dr. Fridenberg's article, whence I quoted them.

Truly yours,

GEO. M. GOULD.